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AUTHOR Daley, Shannon P.; Guy, Kathleen A.
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ABSTRACT

This guide is intended to help church congregations develop and/or strengthen plans for children's ministries and child advocacy. Specifically the work aims to affirm children's growth, discoveries, and experiences and to provide strategies to congregations for helping children whose physical, emotional, social, economic, and educational conditions are depriving them of the opportunity to develop their God-given potential. Following an introduction on the need for such advocacy, section one of the guide explores "Looking at Children through the Eyes of Faith" by means of sermons, Bible study, reflection, prayers, poems, stories, and song. This section also provides examples of children in the Bible and suggestions for children's Sabbath and children's day celebrations. Section two urges, "Making a Difference for Children--Step By Step," and details nine steps for involving a congregation in helping children. Section three provides a four-part format for a "study into action program" and areas for focus such as child care, Head Start, education, vulnerable children and families, homelessness, housing, maternal health, child health, youth development, teen pregnancy prevention, and family income issues. Section four is entitled, "Children of Every Nation," and focuses on providing a global perspective on children's issues. Section five, "Giving Voice to the Voiceless," guides users in advocating for children in the political arena. Included are descriptions of policies and programs vital to children's interests, and effective methods of communication with government officials. Section six provides resources to aid in the fight to help children, including congregational model programs, national faith-based efforts, faith-based public policy organizations, and sources of information for specific issues affecting children. (SD)

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